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A SOIRÉE AND BALL.

I WAS lately present at an entertainment of an extraordinary kind. There is a portion of the population of London which has long been condemned to duty without relief or relaxation, melancholy martyrs to the industrial mania of a city where all work and no play makes many a dull boy. In consequence of a spirited movement among some leading members of the body, it was determined about a month ago, that they should make at least one effort to break up the monotony of existence; that they should have an evening meeting for instruction and amusement; and Willis's Rooms, St James, was the place chosen for the purpose. I was present, but perhaps not corporally, though I thought so at the time. There has been much talk of clairvoyance lately, and I really cannot be quite sure that I had not somehow fallen for a short time into that or some similar 'abnormal state of the nervous system.' Anyhow, I have a tolerably distinct recollection of what I saw, or thought I saw, and I propose describing it all to an unsophisticated public.

By the time I walked into the room, a considerable portion of the company had arrived. I was prepared from the first for some singular assemblage, by being brought at the very first face to face with my old friend, the late Madame Tussaud, who had taken up a position just within the door, as mistress of ceremonies for the evening. There was she, with her neat little face and black-silk cloak and bonnet, in bodily habit as she used to live and have her being long ago at her rooms in Baker Street, after having modelled all the notoriety of her age, from Robespierre to Courvoisier. I would fain have had a brief chat with the old lady; but was quickly admonished by the crowd pushing behind me, that I must move on. I now found myself in the large room, amidst a company who were for the most part walking about in pairs or little groups, to the sound of a lively kind of music, which I soon discovered to proceed from a mechanical orchestra calculated to give the effect of fully twenty instruments at once. There was that pleasant excitement which arises from a crowd and music and novel objects; and some time elapsed ere I had so fully gathered my senses about me, as to take a cool and analytical view of the scene.

What first struck me was a kind of ideal beauty which belonged to a large part of the company. I felt not unfamiliar with the distinguished air and clear red and white complexions of many of these handsome people, and yet I could not at first pronounce where I had seen them, or imagine who they were. The gentlemen had, in every case, nicely-dressed hair and pretty

mustaches, with scarfs of red, green, or black velvet adjusted round their shoulders. They carried their heads very erectly, as if perfectly satisfied that they were models of elegance. Some had a sentimental simper on their features. One or two had a slight cast of the Italian bandit. Others had no expression at all, but were simply good-looking specimens of their race. The ladies who hung upon their arms were likewise, for the most part, very pretty, though, to be strictly just, somewhat deficient in expression; but one prominent fact in the case was, that there was not one who did not exhibit a most attractive *coiffure*, some wearing it in braids, others in ringlets, while a third set rejoiced in wreaths of flowers, or wheat-ears, or green leaves and berries. After a little examination, it became apparent to me that the figures were only solid so far as the bust was concerned, all below that region being of a light and shadowy character, only sufficient to make out something like the entire *eidolon* or shape of a human being. It thus gradually dawned upon me, that this portion of the company was composed of those obliging ladies and gentlemen who take their stand in the perfumers' windows, in order to exemplify such presentments of the hair as may be considered in accordance with aesthetic principles. I was even able to distinguish a few special personages whom I had long known by sight—as, for instance, a bearded gentleman from Davies's, in Great Russell Street, who, with his roguish smile, always reminds me of Don Raphael in *Gil Blas*; also a motley personage of Unwin and Albert's, in Piccadilly, who consents to enlighten mankind on the potency of the celebrated hair-dye of that firm, by shewing 'Before' in red tresses on the one side of his head, and 'After' in a beautiful black semi-chevelure on the other, with a similarly exemplary suit of whiskers and mustaches on reverse sides to match. I could also recall a superb Queen Elizabeth from Sacker's, in Cheapside, and a court-lady of George I. in full puff from Lenox's, in Oxford Street. There was one venerable old man with a flowing beard, from Carles's, in New Bond Street—exactly such a face as Domenichino would have loved to depict for a Joseph. I felt, however, ashamed of a certain lady, also from Lenox's, who went about with a label on her back, 'LADIES' MAIDS TAUGHT HAIR-DRESSING.'

Mixed with these fine people were others of a miscellaneous character, all of whom manifested a marvellous indifference to the incongruity of their associations. There was that handsome, white-teethed, black-mustached, merry-eyed foreigner, who winks and opens and shuts his mouth at Mr Fresco the dentist's door, in Oxford Street. I could not help admiring the quizzical air with which he eyed the whole scene. There was a

dashing young lady in a riding-habit, but with only a shadowy head, from Woolf the outfitter's, in Piccadilly. We had a Queen and Prince in ceremonial robes, from Bradbrook the glazier's, in Park Street, Regent's Park; from another glazier's in Hampstead came the dwarf Sir Geoffrey Hudson, in full arms and accoutrements, as he appeared at the court of Henrietta Maria. Several full-dressed Highlanders, taking eternal pinches of snuff from horn *mulls*, presented their respectable figures; one with a sharp sentimental look, from Rayner's, in Tottenham Court Road; another from Jones's, in James Street, Oxford Street, of a very solemn aspect, with knit brows, and holding out his finger and thumb with an air of *empressement*, as if it were the National Covenant. There was a cheerful pair of peasants, from Walker and Lee's, straw-hat-makers, Oxford Street, bearing each a sickle and a handful of newly-cut wheat, and thus conferring a simple rustic grace on the assembly. As if to contrast with these, five mediæval gentlemen, in complete suits of plate-armour, originally from the collection of the Grand-duke of Würtemberg, but more immediately from Pratt the upholsterer's, in New Bond Street, tramped heavily along the room. As for contrast in another direction, I found that a milliner of Ludgate Hill had come with a full-suited baby, which usually lies in her window for the exemplification of the beau-ideal of infantine attire, to the infinite admiration of continual streams of passing mammae actual and potential. The ladies were, in general, much interested in this unconscious member of the company, whom they saluted with many expressions of endearment, notwithstanding that no papa or mamma was present. They were in an equal degree shocked by a little gentleman who had come, as appeared to me, only half-dressed, but walked about with an air of perfect self-possession, as if he thought himself the very glass of fashion and the mould of form. Most of the company were at a loss to understand who or what he was; but I soon recognised an old friend. He was, in reality, a gentleman of perfect propriety of manners, but whose *rôle* it is to stand under a glass-shade in Sandland and Crane's, Regent Quadrant, to make mankind acquainted with the merits of the Patent Belt Drawers and Shirt.

There was a portion of the company whom I at first thought somewhat vulgar and out of place, but whom I afterwards became reconciled to, seeing that a profound moral was connected with them. The substance of these people consisted in what was covered by certain special garments, while the rest, including the head, was generally of that shadowy character which has already been spoken of. There was no sort of mystery about any of them, for they all wore conspicuous labels telling what they were. There was a perfect mob of gentlemen with broad shoulders and well-developed haunches, supplemented by heads and limbs of shadow, and wearing such cognizances as BURROWS'S NUNNY COAT, 1s. 6d., or THE OXONIAN, L.I., 2s. 6d., or MITCHELL'S UNIVERSAL MORNING COAT, 30s. A shape, composed almost entirely of dressing-gown, would be seen going about, bearing STYLE UNEQUALLED on his proudly-swelling breast. A navvy, all shadow except in the lower part of his form, exhibited in that region a placard with the defiant legend, I KNOW YOU CAN'T MATCH ME, 5s. 6d. A clerk walked with a similarly placed announcement, TROUSERS FOR THE PARK, 12s. 6d. There were scores of people labelled THOROUGHLY SHRUNK; TO ORDER, 25s.; ALL WOOL; and so forth—each seeming in the highest degree vain of his *rôle*.

There were also some handsome little boys, inscribed MR SCR, 1s. 6d.; HANDSOME TUNIC, 19s. 6d.; or perhaps something more insinuating, as THE LITTLE DUCK, or NOW OWN IT IS UNIQUE. Nor must I omit to specify certain female figures with shadowy heads and feet left to the imagination, the solid part being composed of pretty wrappers designated as NEW STYLE, FAST COLOUR, THE ROBE, VERY CHOICE, or DIRECT FROM PARIS, with in every case a sum of money indicated, about which I could not but remark, as in all the preceding cases, there was always an odd sixpence—a mysterious circumstance, which I cannot even yet pretend to have penetrated. A few demure widows mingled in the throng, some in very deep mourning, others in half-mourning, and others with only a faint remnant of the lugubrious left in their appearance, and perhaps a bonnet ticketed TRES JOIE on their heads. I at first, as I said, beheld these shapes of humanity with some degree of contempt; but when I afterwards reflected on the great truth, that most of the people of this world are little, besides shapes of vesture, I saw reason to regard them as no unsuitable part of the company.

It had been arranged that a part of the evening should be devoted to a lecture on some of the more remarkable facts and truths which have recently been elicited by science and art; and so, at half-past eight precisely, a gentleman quietly mounted the rostrum, and began to discourse. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' said he, 'we are now an eminently practical people. The time for inquiries after the *to kalon* and *to propon* on the one hand, and the Perpetual Motion and Philosopher's Stone on the other, is past. The Exhibition of 1851 may be accepted as the type of our age. Whatever promotes the conveniences of life, whatever adds to our wealth, these are the things that now demand and receive our attention. And what is remarkable, my friends, of the reigning knowledge of our time, is, that it is not, like the coy philosophies of ancient days, to be sought in secluded libraries and laboratories, in the closet of the student or the cell of the monk. It comes forth into the highways of the busy world, so that he who runs, or even he who rushes along in omnibuses, may read. The fact is, that one cannot now take a forenoon excursion in or about London, without acquiring more knowledge than it was possible to obtain a few years ago from a week of regular study. To illustrate this, I will tell what happened to myself only yesterday. Having got into a Paddington omnibus, I there had an important fact impressed upon me, namely, that "The Albert Night-lights are the best." While thankful for the fact, I could not but admire the manner in which it was put. Observe the style of the present day—brief, pithy, simply indicative. If the author of this aphorism had made any allusion whatever to Child's or Price's Night-lights, even in the way of condemnation, he would have left the subject in a doubtful state. The public might have imagined that Child and Price were ill-used men, and a reaction might have consequently taken place in their favour. He knew better. He merely announces the truth, according to his own profound convictions, leaving it to the chance of fixing itself in the popular mind, as doubtless it will do. I had occasion afterwards to spend five minutes at a railway station on the north side of the city, and there I learned a few more important truths. One was: "No captain or emigrant should go to sea without Moore and Buckley's Patent Concentrated Milk." Another: "Emigrants should all have a supply of Borwick's Baking Powder, which supersedes yeast, and effects a great saving in butter and eggs." Not being a captain or an emigrant, I did not feel that these maxims were of so much consequence to me as that regarding the Night-lights; but, of course, in the limited circle to which they are addressed, they are truths of the greatest consequence. While on the

same platform, however, I learned some things of more general application. For example: "A nice hot plate for your venison, game, haunch of mutton, &c., is a luxury at the dinner-table which persons of refined taste can appreciate." So far it is of the nature of a truism; but mark what follows: "Every description of hot-water plate hitherto has been a complete failure: Barlow's Newly-Invented Hot-water Plate, on the contrary, is warranted the very acme of perfection!" Here the clearness of the language and decisiveness of the affirmation are equally admirable. Barlow, unlike many other announcers of great truths, has nothing enigmatic in his style. That I account a great merit, and it is one characteristic of our age.

"The familiar simplicity of style in which many of the greatest facts are now presented to the world, is certainly much to be applauded. They come to us in forms as light and easy as the whispers of confidential friends, or the chit-chat of the family circle. One of these instructors of mankind assumes that a common subject of consideration with the many is, "What shall I put on for a Light Over-coat?" and immediately adds, by way of a solution of the difficulty: "Call and see Hobson's New Pallium, in all colours, price two guineas, with silk sleeve-linings." Another starts with a friendly query: "Do you keep livery-servants?" and in case you do, adds for your information: "Doudney's Liveries satisfy both masters and servants"—a fact which we should hail with delight even if only half true. The benevolence and conscientiousness mixed with some announcements give them an additional claim to respect. One who asks: "Where do you buy your bottled beer?" recommends himself warmly to our regard when we find him commencing his answer to the question thus: "For your own sake, and in common justice, you should go to Earle Brothers & Co., &c. Of more philanthropic purport still is the following:—"Embarrassed debtors should consult, confidentially, and without charge, Messrs Horne, the experienced accountants and negotiators, in order to obtain immediate relief, without imprisonment or publicity, and insure their business being conducted efficiently at the least possible expense," &c. Surely Mr Macaulay is right when he adduces the humanity of our times as something in advance of former ages. Long ago, it was held as a great virtue to visit your fellow-creatures in prison; but here, in our day, are men who consider it their duty to prevent their neighbours from being put in prison, and are solicitous to get people to come to them, and be saved from that calamity."

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Inverness-shire acquaintance, whom he hailed as "Long John," he was led aside for a few minutes, and offered a "wee thocht" of the said worthy's "gatherings of mountain-dew from Ben Nevis;"* when presently out came our quondam grave Caledonian, red-hot foul, and seizing a lady from Truefitt's, in Burlington Arcade, round the waist, commenced a corant with her which, for vigour and vivacity of movement, threw all the waltzes and polkas of the evening into the shade. At this crisis, the company received an accession of friends, who, from a mistake in the sending of the invitations, had not been able to come sooner. They were a queer people, their figures being wholly shadowy and supplemental, except the front half of their heads. I soon recognised them as a set of ladies and gentlemen who keep watch and ward over the doors of certain middle-aged houses in Bedford Square, Kentish Town, and other parts of the city. They are of all varieties of expression—some severely classical and grave, others grotesque and ugly, a few not a little resembling Silenus and the Satyrs. Here all broke out into intense merriment alike, even the helmeted Minerva relaxing from her severe grace, while the old grotesque gentlemen winked and laughed and lolled out their tongues in the most waggish manner imaginable. The whole scene was so inexpressibly droll and fantastic, that I felt it would not be possible to bear it long. It was therefore a positive relief when, at the stroke of one of Hewitt's gongs from Fenchurch Street—one of those which he tells us is "calculated to alarm the country for miles round"—the music ceased, the dancers came to a pause, and the *tout ensemble* of the company began slowly to fade before my eyes, so that in about five minutes I felt myself standing alone on the empty and silent floor.

TITTLE-TATTLE ON TAILS.

It has lately been necessary for me to glance over several classes of animals, for I am a naturalist by profession and inclination, and I was, while so occupied, struck with the importance of tails, and the little consideration which is shewn towards these graceful or useful appendages. The following remarks, made with but little reference to technical order, may perhaps excite in others some interest in the subject.

There seems to be an innate principle in man, to make himself of as much consequence as he can; and one of the means to effect this was, at various periods, an attempt to give himself a tail; but, with great inconsistency, instead of following the indications of nature, he had recourse to an opposite part of the frame, and placed his tail or cue upon his head. There was the thick braid of hair, hanging down between the shoulders; the smaller tail, tightly bound up with black ribbon; the loosely-tied tail; the tail of the courtier, with a bag attached to it; the short medical tail; the gentleman's tail, and military tails of several kinds—the most whimsical of which was that invented in the time of the Duke of York, which, looking like a small riding-whip, and hanging between the shoulders, was supposed to ward off the cut of a sabre, but which caused so much pain and inconvenience when fastened to the hair, that officers frequently attached theirs to their caps, or helmets; and a row of tails might be seen hanging up in the hall, while their owners were at dinner rejoicing in their freedom. But all these tails have nearly vanished from society; and there is now no nation which perseveres in courting the caudal graces except the Chinese. But as the reception into China of barbarians, or Englishmen, who delight in pulling John Chinaman by the tail, is every year increasing, there

* See Timberlake, 15 Albany Street.

is little doubt that even these tails will eventually disappear with other peculiarities.

I now turn from superior, but tailless man, to those animals which most nearly approach him; which, though differing much among themselves, may be all included under the familiar name of monkeys. Those most like man have no tails, and some of inferior rank also are tailless; but the most careless observer must be convinced of the ungraceful appearance they make. The most active are well provided with these appendages; and few can behold unmoved a rogue of a *semnopithecus*, for example, walking with an air of indifference past his companions, while they are busily employed in eating fruit. In order to look still more unconcerned, he appears to be very busy with his tail, and carefully examining its tip, which he carries between his fingers; but, just at the moment when his intended victim is off his guard, down goes the tail, the delicious morsel is seized on its way to the mouth, and as the thief springs off with it, the tail swings aloft in triumph. Watch a number of the same genus clambering up some tall trees to a height which makes the eye ache to look at them: the monkeys are in search of the tails of their neighbours the parrots, the feathers of which they pull out, that they may suck the juices from the quills. Just as one appears to have attained his prize, his own tail is pulled; and while he is held forcibly, another rushes over him, whose tail he in turn seizes; and both slip down together, screaming and chattering, and the birds make their escape.

But few are aware of the value of monkeys' tails, unless they have kept these animals in their possession. If a rebellious pet should become savage, grin, chatter, and shew signs of an intention to bite, lay hold of him by the tail, and hold him up by it: he cannot turn upon you then, and you have him at your command till the fit is over. Another use of monkeys' tails is to steady themselves when riding on the back of one another, which they are very fond of doing. A good-natured fellow of my acquaintance, with a red skin and bright blue face, used often to treat a party of five small brethren to a morning excursion. As they clustered together upon his back, their only means of steadyng themselves was by throwing their tails around their steed.

The spider-monkey, with his long legs, sits, by the half-hour at a time, looking as if he were composing an epic poem; then, as if to laugh at our opinion of his wisdom, he suddenlycurls his long tail round the bough of a tree, and swings to and fro in the air; after which he as suddenly stops, and inserts the said tail into crevices and hollow places, to seek for honey or other food. The pretty little marmoset, or omistiti, perfectly envelops itself in its large ringed-tail; and is so chilly, that it is a question if, in this climate, it could live through a cold night without the warmth which the tail affords. The young lemurs do that in earnest which others do in sport; and firmly adhering to their mother by means of their tails, accompany her in all her lazy movements.

It is in the feline tribes that tails are most beautifully developed. The lion, when peaceably inclined, stands sideways before us, his grand head turned round, and his tail hanging down in graceful repose; but, awaked him to anger, and the tail instantly begins to swing from side to side; then, as his anger rises into fury, he lashes himself with it; and when he springs upon his victim, it is triumphantly raised in the air. So is it with tigers and leopards. In cats, this mode of indicating emotion is carried still further. Nothing can be more graceful than the curve with which they throw their tail round their feet, when seated in a contented frame; but if a strange dog should appear, every hair on it stands up; it becomes like a bottle-brush, and adds to the fierceness of their demeanour. Then puss welcomes you home by sticking her tail up, and rubbing against your legs; and who can forbear a

smile, when, in youthful giddiness, she twirls round after it; or, in a maturer age, swings it about as a plaything for her children? Thus affection, contentment, fierce indignation, defiance, and fear, are all expressed by puss's tail.

To the dog, the tail is invaluable as a means of manifesting his feelings, even when partial amputation has been resorted to, under the false impression of improving its beauty. If he casts an imploring look, and petitions for something greatly desired, away goes the tail in double-quick time; if he wishes to say how pleased he is to see you, the tail wags faster than ever; if he thinks you are in affliction, he comes gently towards you, licks your hand, or lays his chin upon your knee, and the tail keeps pace with the subdued character of his feelings: in joy, its motion is accelerated; but if he sorrows, the tail goes down immediately. Conscience will sometimes strike him, and he then goes up to his master or mistress, with his tail between his legs, and does his best to confess his errors; and shame and misery are as evident in the depressed tail, as in the eyes and carriage of the head.

Timid, skulking animals seldom raise the tail, as may be seen in the wolf and hyena. The fox usually carries his downwards, but raises it higher than the wolf does. Otters, and other amphibious animals, generally have their tails horizontally compressed, so that they serve as rudders in the water; but the tail of the squirrel is always erect, spreading like a feather, and serving as a rudder in the air when the animal takes its vigorous leaps. The tail of the beaver is the subject of a curious mistake, having been represented as employed by the animal in the capacity of a trowel for the construction of its house. In reality, it enables the owner to raise himself. The prehensile tail of the opossum is an important auxiliary; for frequently, when the mother goes in search of food for her family, she insures the safety of her little ones, by hanging them by their tails to the bough of a tree, as the peasantry of the south of Europe used—and perhaps still do—to hang their swaddled children against the wall while attending to their necessary avocations. The kangaroo may be said to possess a fifth limb in its tail: it gives steadiness to its upright position; it enables it to take its enormous leaps, and facilitates its ordinary leaping movements; and, when the animal raises itself, to look out for its enemies, it, like the beaver, may be said to stand on tip-tail.

Few, I presume, have not heard of the ingenious rat which dipped its tail into the treacle-jar, and sucked off the sweet coating which it had acquired, when the opening was too long and narrow to admit of any other mode of access to the delicious feast. The tail of the porcupine is short and insignificant, but the negroes of Western Africa raise it into importance by drying it, and sticking it into a musical instrument called a *sanko*. The whizzing noise which it sends forth, is supposed by them to be a pleasing addition to the sounds which the strings produce.

Some animals seem to have tails as a means of ridding them of the insects which torment them; and I suppose there must be a division of labour, in the instance of the elephant, between the tail and the trunk, for the former is inadequate to the whole service. Neither does it increase the beauty of its owner's appearance, for it is clumsy, and expanded at the tip into a semicircle, set with straggling bristles. Man, however, makes use of these tails in the very way for which they seem so little adapted, for he cuts them off, spangles them with gold, and has them waved before him to scatter his winged enemies. He also has them made into whips, and all backs that have undergone their application, will bear testimony to their efficacy.

The glory of tails lies among horses, and in one of the bovine race. It is a strangely perverted taste that, wholly or partially, deprives animals of those means that

have been bestowed on them for their beauty or comfort; but the fashion of docking horses has abated, and we now more frequently see their tails merely clipped, to avoid their trailing in the dirt; and certainly additional grace and dignity have been preserved by not interfering with nature's decrees. The yak, or grunting cow, can cover its body with the long silvery hair of its tail, like a cloak, and its beauty has caused it to be adopted by Eastern nations as a standard. Others of the genus bos boast of long tails, with a tuft of hair at the end, which serves to whisk off the flies. The warriors of Ashantee have some incantations performed over these tails by their priests; and when decorated for battle, wear them as charms, hanging from their wrists, and the tops of their large red boots. I cannot quit ox and cows' tails without mentioning the excellent soup manufactured from them, or alluding to the youthful prank of that distinguished traveller, Mungo Park. On one occasion, every man, boy, or able-bodied female, was turned into the hay-field, to save the crop from an approaching storm; and Mungo Park alone was spared, that he might watch the cows, and prevent them from straying. Not much liking the office, he took a book with him, and seated himself under a hedge to read. Whenever he lifted up his eyes, the cows were at a distance, and wide apart; and it gave him so much trouble and fatigue to bring both back again, that he knotted their tails together, a proceeding which, for a time, greatly diminished his trouble. Presently, however, the unruly animals became impatient of the restraint which this manoeuvre imposed, and tried to separate themselves; they pulled and tugged with such violence that, at last, one of the tails was wrenched off. The suffering animal rushed about in a frantic manner; and Mungo Park, hoping to conceal his share of the adventure, detached the loose tail from the other cow, and threw it into some bushes. When the inhabitants of the farm returned, they found the cow still raging, and as the boy did not betray himself, the accident appeared to be inexplicable. A few days after, the tail was found, and as some one must have thrown it there, the future traveller was questioned, and his delinquency was clearly manifested.

The tremendous power which lies in the tail of the cetacea, especially the whale, surpasses description. Large boats full of men are tossed high up into the air by it; and its strength can only be appreciated by those who have come to close combat with these creatures.

The real tail of birds is but a trifling prolongation of the vertebrae; but this prolongation forms the foundation for the most splendid decorations of this beautiful portion of animal life; and all those birds in which the tail-feathers are short, have an awkward or unfinished look—witness the kingfisher, which, in spite of its otherwise brilliant plumage, is a clumsy-looking bird for its size; and still worse is the Cochin-China fowl, presenting a complete contrast to our domestic hens, which look so compact and demure, from the neat shape of their stiff and regular tail, while the cock struts about like a commanding-officer with his waving plumes.

Of all the strange, and, at the same time, elegant tails which adorn the feathered race, those of the lyre-bird of New South Wales are the most distinguished, for the two outside feathers exactly resemble the supports of an ancient lyre, while the more slender feathers of the middle look like the disordered strings of the instrument. The climbing-birds make use of the stiff feathers of their tails, to assist them in ascending trees and other upright surfaces. The peacock, the argus, and other pheasants, are glorious among their tribe, owing to their tails; which, in the two former, are supposed to be given to them to frighten their enemies; and in all, to make them handsome in the eyes of their mates. Turkeys display theirs with such an air of importance and pride, that it is scarcely possible to avoid giving them a character for conceit. They find a singular use

for them when they emigrate in their wild state in search of food. As they roost in trees, the larger birds of prey pounce upon them; but the cunning turkeys put down their heads, and so turn up their tails as to cover their backs, and form an inclined plane. Their enemies thus alight on a smooth and slanting surface, and instantly slide down to the ground. The tail of the ostrich conveys to every one ideas of grace and elegance.

It is chiefly in the lizard form, among reptiles, that tails are conspicuous. Those of the serpent-tribe are so much a part of their bodies, that they may, in truth, be considered as such only because they are placed at the opposite extremity to the head. In some instances, the difference is just distinguishable; but two only seem to demand notice—namely, that of the rattlesnake, which is provided with horny rings, which clash together when it moves, and thus warn other animals of their owner's dangerous approach; and the boa constrictors, which have a fleshy hook, by which they are better able to grasp the boughs of trees when they lie in wait for their prey.

The mighty crocodile lashes the water in which it may be into foam when it is enraged; but it has by no means the romantic serpentine tail given to it by various authors and artists; it can make a wide curve with it and the body, but not more. That of the alligator is more slender and yielding, but does not emulate the serpent in its movements.

In some lizards, the least touch will take off the tail; and nothing can be more ungraceful than a tailless lizard, and nothing much more whimsical than a lizard with two tails; for such is the exuberance of the reproductive powers of these creatures, that if a wound be made in the tail with which they are already provided, another will often spring forth.

The tails of fishes sometimes exhibit great beauty of form and colour. They form the rudders by which the animals are guided through the element in which they live. In a few cases, this organ helps its owner to climb trees. It is by the force which resides in these tails, that fishes take those enormous leaps which have been recorded, especially by those who capture salmon.

The tails of lobsters, prawns, and shrimps, are much too good eating to be omitted in this rapid view of the subject. That of the scorpion is a dangerous weapon for those whose blood may be in bad condition, but for those who are healthy, the poison which lies at the end of it merely causes irritation for a few days.

The tails of some insects are formidable on account of the stings which lie in them; and nothing can be more wicked-looking than that of the 'devil's coach-horse'; but this class of animals presents too wide a field to be entered into here. I could go on at much greater length, but I trust I have already made out a good case in favour of tails, and rescued them from that want of respect with which they are too apt to be treated.

THE PULSKIES IN AMERICA.

CONCLUDING ARTICLE.

MR and MRS PULSKY, who, as formerly mentioned, accompanied Kossuth in his journey through the United States, possessed opportunities of a peculiarly favourable kind for seeing the interior of American society, and hearing the expression of opinions on many interesting topics.

Travelling from city to city, from the northern to the southern states, they of course everywhere remark the distinctions of colour, as well as the general effects of 'involuntary servitude.' Yet on this distracting subject a praiseworthy discretion is maintained, while views of the slavery question are presented, which invite consideration in this country. One or two points may be referred to. England, as is well known,

draws almost its entire supply of cotton from America, and this cotton 'is exclusively the result of slave-labour.' As it is further notorious, that the prosperity of Great Britain depends in a very large degree on the existence of its cotton manufacture, how is it proposed to find a sufficiency of cotton to keep the mills of Lancashire and Lanarkshire going, if slavery is abolished in the United States? According to Mr Pulszky, the true way to finish American slavery is not to attack it by argument—which will never come to much good—but to undermine it by ceasing to import American cotton. But this transatlantic cotton will continue to be bought, until the article can be had cheaper elsewhere. Would it not, then, be consistent with common sense, to look about, in the first place, for this cheaper article? Yet this is what the people of England—Mr Bright, and a few thoughtful men in Manchester excepted—will not take the trouble to do. The following is Pulszky's doctrine on the subject, and sounder sentiments were never uttered:—

'The price of a full-grown, strong slave, occupied in the cotton-fields, is now on an average 800 dollars; and though his maintenance for one year is assumed to be only fifty dollars, the profit which he yields to the owner is, on an average, not more than one cent on the pound of cotton. If cotton becomes one cent cheaper in Liverpool, either by supplies from Asia and Africa, or by a process which would cheapen the flax, the "peculiar institution" will soon decline. The English Abolitionists, therefore, could not further their object better than by urging the reform of the government of India. As soon as India is covered with a net of highroads, canals, and railways, as soon as it offers a sure field for investing English capital, the East will again compete with the southern states of the Union, and slavery will be abolished. A little less of martial spirit in the governors-general, and at the Board of Control, and a little more attention paid to the development of Hindoo agriculture, will soon liberate the African race. George Thompson would have more successfully advocated abolition by pressing the East Indian question in parliament, than by his lecturing-tour through the northern states. We are told that Port Natal, in Africa, Moreton Bay, in Australia, and the banks of the Parana, are likely to produce cotton to any extent. If this be the case, the great difficulty of the United States will be solved without concussion. The effects of a good government in those countries will be felt in every slave-cabin from Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. From abroad there is scarcely any other effective mode of action for the abolition of African bondage in America. Declamations against the institution, uttered by foreigners, are of no use; on the contrary, they imbitter the southerner, to whom an Abolitionist is just such a bugbear as Proudhon is to a Paris banker.'

Mrs Pulszky bears willing testimony to the excellence of the New-England character, which she seems to think has been too frequently undervalued. 'New England is said to be the country of money-making Yankees and political schemers, of theoretical scholars and blue-stockings. But, on the other hand, we found in the west and south, that wherever a place thrived more than the neighbourhood, it was principally due to emigrated New Englanders; and the clean and nice appearance of Cleveland, and the Western Reserve, in Ohio, peopled by Yankees, gave me the most favourable

impression of the character of the inhabitants of the north-eastern states.' Entering Connecticut, which, like Massachusetts, was founded on religious principles, we find many pleasing evidences of at least external progress. 'I had heard that the Yankees are sacrificing every feeling to gain, and bending every faculty to acquisition; but I found myself most agreeably surprised by the charming appearance of Newhaven, with its broad places, and the magnificent double alley of elms, which, forming a vault with their branches, resemble a gigantic cathedral with two side-aisles round the nave. The court-house, an elegant building, facing an extensive meadow, was the place where the city authorities addressed Kossuth, under the colonnade, to which a broad staircase leads from the green field below, crowded by a respectfully listening multitude. From the opposite window of the hotel, where I was seated, the view was gay and brilliant.'

Proceeding from Newhaven, they visit Whitneyville, the seat of a large musket-manufactory, placed in a picturesque valley, watered by a fine stream. Mr Whitney, the proprietor, is the son of Eli Whitney, who became eminent for his invention for cleaning cotton. In this retired spot, he has erected a manufactory of firearms, on which the tourists pass no opinion. Mrs Pulszky's wish was to see the workmen's houses, and she and her husband visited them, while the other members of the party were receiving the ceremony of a public welcome. We shall allow her to describe what she saw. 'The houses are neat whitewashed buildings, one story high, surrounded by a garden, all of pretty equal size. We entered one, and found on the ground-floor a nice carpeted parlour—a piano stood at the wall, a round table in the midst of the room, several elegant chairs around, and various ornamental trinkets upon the mantle-piece. The upper story was occupied by three bedrooms, each containing a large bed, a wash-stand, a table, a drawer, and a couple of cane-chairs. *In all these rooms we noticed books.* I was curious to see what kind of literature interested the working-classes. I found the Bible, and, instead of novels, the Life of the Virginian statesman Henry Patrick, travels, history, a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and a heap of newspapers. We visited a second house; it was of the same description. We parted with deep respect from a community where the workmen earn so much as to enjoy life with their families, and to cultivate their minds.' It does not seem to have occurred to the writer, that amount of earnings is really of little consequence, if there be not self-denial, self-respect, and a certain refinement of taste.

Entering Massachusetts, the travellers were now in the land of schools and colleges, where every child is educated, and where everybody reads and has the faculty of thinking. In Boston, the capital of this intelligent community, they were politely received into the best circles, and brought in contact with some of the most eminent literary and scientific men in America. Society is described as being learned and select. 'In London or in Paris, many more celebrated men of science may be found; but these capitals are of such immense extent, and so many different interests divide and split people into sets and coteries, that the literary and scientific element is entirely diluted, whilst in Boston it forms one of the principal features of society. Love of science is inherent in New England; the Whig principle—that knowledge is the best safeguard of

freedom, more so than armies; that therefore every citizen, whether childless or blessed with many children, must contribute to public education; that the common schools must be free to every child; and that the state must afford the greatest facility for higher education, prevails here generally, even amongst the democrats. In other states, they favour rather the voluntary principle of education, establishing the schools by public money, but endeavouring to make them self-supporting, by the fees of the students, as they take the education of the children to be the duty of the parents, not of the citizens at large. It is through schools and instruction that Massachusetts strives against crime and oppression; and in the regular expenditure of this state, public education has the prominent place which in Europe is given to the army and navy estimates. Such being the case, we cannot wonder that workmen's houses are something different from what are usually found in Great Britain.

Among the distinguished residents in Boston is now included the celebrated M. Agassiz, who has quitted the attractions of the Old World to carry to the New a love of natural history. 'We observed to him,' says Mrs Pulszky, 'that it must be painful for a man who in Europe was surrounded by all the facilities for observation, and who could there work and combine the results of the investigations of many others occupied in the same line, to be in some way excluded from the benefits of co-operation, as not even all the scientific publications on natural history find their way across the ocean.' But the discoverer of the theory of glaciers [?] told us, that he is most satisfied with his position; he might have acquired greater renown in Europe, but he certainly is more useful in America; for, though he loses precious time in details, which in Europe others would work out for him, he originates here a school of naturalists, who will not fail to advance the science. He is now engaged in microscopic researches on the infusoria, and in observations on the metamorphoses of animal life. The tadpole and the caterpillar are not the only instances of those transformations; and one of the last discoveries of M. Agassiz shews, that several species of the infusoria are nothing else than the embryos of mollusca. Embryology has become, by this discovery, a chief object of his attention; but whether he speaks on the recent coral formation of Florida, and of the fossil corals which were heaved up in the Jura range, or whether it is the transformation of the crabs and mollusca, he always gives to science that lively interest and practical bearing which is sure to captivate the hearer. By his energetic activity, he finds time also for the general interests of humanity, and especially for the important question of education, in regard to university reform.

Further on, in treating of the national character of the Americans, it is shewn that, like the English, they are a deeply earnest and religious people; and nothing could be more evident than that they are so, for in no country in the world is so much done, in a spirit of freewill-offering, for the support of religious ordinances. It does not appear to us, that this remarkable feature in the American character has ever been done justice to in England. In our own country, the support of religion is a traditional institution, originating in the piety of ages long since past. In America, the piety is not legendary, but a living thing of modern society; and what it does in the way of maintaining not only the face, but the body and soul of religion throughout the land, presents forcible view of generosity of character. The Americans, says Pulszky, 'provide for the religious wants of the entire population by churches and preachers, though the church is nowhere maintained by the state, and cannot draw its revenues, year by year, whether felt to deserve them or not. In the 36,000 churches of the Union, there is accommodation for 13,850,000 worshippers; and people avail themselves

every Sunday of this opportunity to an extent unknown to the lower classes in England. The Americans, unlike their English brothers, take care of the education of all the white children of the free states—not only in the cities, but also in the rural districts—and endeavour to do the same in the south. The American government, in the States and in Washington, does not rest on the exclusive influence of the wealthier classes, but on the education of the people at large. Contrary to English custom, it is the state, not the church, which provides for the schools; yet secular education has not impaired the religiousness of the people.'

In noticing the book before us, we have refrained from making any remark on the special circumstances which took the Pulszkies to America, and made them, to a certain extent, the guests of the nation. Kossuth appears to have been everywhere received with enthusiasm; but, as is well known, his aims met with no practical response, or, at all events, ended in nothing but a few gifts and good wishes. Much, also, of the enthusiasm displayed, was undoubtedly ascribable to the rage for novelty and excitement. In some places, the party were visited by crowds, who thronged as if to a show. With an account of one of these demonstrations, which took place at Washington, we may close our notice of this amusing work.

'The visitors thronged to Brown's Hotel, to claim an introduction to Kossuth; and as they were considerably more than our apartment could hold, we could neither request them to sit down, nor, of course would we keep them standing; therefore we had no choice but to bow and to shake hands, without attempting any conversation. Yet there was a great deal of variety in this pantomimic intercourse. One moment a lady trips in, wrapped in velvet and furs from head to foot, a fan in her hand, her uplifted veil flowing down over her plumed bonnet. The gentleman who accompanies her, proclaims her name; I murmur: "Most happy indeed;" we look at each other; we both bow; the tip of her fingers lightly touches my hand: she passes on. An old senator follows; he emphatically presses Madame Kossuth's hand, saying: "Welcome to our shores." Next a lady, in a rather weather-beaten morning-attire, with a shawl and bonnet that must have witnessed many a New-year's Day levee; she stares at us most intently, and only utters: "How do you do?" I re-echo her salutation; she stares again, and most probably would long continue to do so, but she is pushed on by another lady, looking very determined, with several children at her side and at her heels. "Take off your hat, Charley!" says she, to discipline her son. The children behind her cry: "We can't see!" a little confusion ensues. The lady elbows right and left; "Now the girls can see," exclaims she, and begins to inquire how many children Madame Kossuth has, and how many I, and where they are, and how they are, poor little things! But the gentleman who has the trying task of introductions, gets impatient, and exclaims: "This will not do; please, ladies and gentlemen, to pass on; so many are coming; please, ladies, not to stop." And ladies and gentlemen, old and young, pass now in so quick succession, that I can hardly retain the name or the faces, though many of them are well worth remembering: members of the senate; generals and colonels; officers of the navy and their ladies; interesting and sweet countenances from the north and the south, the east and the west. . . .

'The room begins to grow emptier, a few visitors yet approach, amongst them a lovely woman. She has tears in her eyes as she welcomes us to the land of the free; she leads in her hand a little girl of striking beauty, who wistfully glances up to us; and her mother says: "Darling, these are the ladies of whom you have heard so often, the ladies who have suffered so much with their children—should you not like to have like-

wise the dear little ones with us?" Such warm greeting we had repeatedly experienced in every quarter of the States which we had visited; at the firesides of the rich, amidst the crowds of the people; in the shops of the working-classes, in the asylum of the blind. But that tearful sympathy, freely expressed likewise in the drawing-room, deeply impressed me with the conviction, that artificial conventionalism has here not deadened that delightful sensibility, whose absence leaves so many fashionable resorts void of every genuine charm.

IRELAND AS A SUGAR COUNTRY.

Some interesting discussions have lately taken place with regard to the practicability of rendering Ireland a sugar-producing country. The present condition of Ireland, more than the increased consumption of sugar in Britain, has been the cause of these discussions; and of the many remedies that have been suggested to give stimulus to agricultural improvement and rural industry, this seems to be one well worthy of consideration.

Many publications have recently appeared on this important subject; we have now before us Sir Robert Kane's Report,* embodying a series of valuable investigations to which it will be well to call the attention of our readers, and which will enable us, at the same time, to give some general details respecting the nature and peculiarities of the beet-crop. Although inclined to regard some of the conclusions drawn in the Report as too sanguine to be verified by actual experiments in practical farming, still we cannot too highly commend the admirable manner in which it has been drawn up, and the many really valuable scientific results obtained.

The percentage of sugar contained in beet, as well as its general composition, has been the subject of much careful investigation on the part of continental chemists, from the time of Margraf of Berlin (1747) to the present day. He obtained from the bulb of the white or sugar-beet, 6·25 per cent. of sugar; from the roots, properly so called, 5 per cent.; and from the red beet, 4·5 per cent. Half a century later, Hermbstadt obtained 4·5 per cent. of crystallisable sugar, and 3·5 per cent. of uncryallisable mucilage sugar. This led him to conclude, that a part of the sugar contained in the beet was uncryallisable. This opinion prevailed until 1831, when Pelouze's researches proved that the whole of the sugar contained in the beet was cryallisable cane-sugar, and that neither grape-sugar nor mannite existed in the beet, except when it had undergone alteration. These results have been confirmed and extended by M. Peligot. 'Besides confirming the two important results of M. Pelouze—namely, that the whole of the sugar was cryallisable cane-sugar, and that the percentage of sugar gradually increased until the beet was fully ripe—he has shewn that the amount of sugar which the beet may contain is very large, very little inferior, indeed, to the sugar-cane, and thus fixed a sort of goal to which good cultivation should finally arrive.'

It is not enough, however, for the purposes of the sugar-manufacturer, that the beet-root contains sugar in sufficient proportion to its other constituents; it is requisite

that that sugar should not be dissolved in too large a proportion of water. This is a difficult point for determination by mere experiment, for even the best juice is not a solution of pure sugar, but is mixed up with other ingredients, so that specific gravity cannot be depended upon as a sure test for indicating the percentage of saccharine matter.

The beet-sugar question, in its relation to Ireland, is of a twofold nature. In the first place—Is the sugar-beet suited to the soil and climate of the country? If so, will it yield a sufficient acreage of sugar, fit for manufacture, to render it a remunerative crop in a commercial point of view?

In regard to the former of these questions, there can be no sort of doubt, as the natural history of the beet settles the question. The beet is a production indigenous to Great Britain and Ireland, and is, therefore, a sure crop everywhere suited to our ungenial clime. All the cultivated varieties contain sugar, but the one generally employed in the sugar manufacture is the white Silesian, usually known under the name of sugar-beet. Indeed, the chemical composition of the different varieties does not appear to differ to any appreciable extent, the accidental variation among specimens of the same variety being, however, occasionally very considerable. In Russia, the Siberian beet, an inferior sugar variety, is still much employed.

With reference to the question, whether the sugar-beet is likely to prove a remunerative crop in Ireland, Messrs Sullivan and Gages' Report (Appendix B) affords valuable information, their analyses of Irish-grown beet having been evidently made with the view of establishing this point, which, however, they found to be a very complex one. At page 25 of their Report, it is observed:—³ An impression appears to prevail, that heat and sunshine are so intimately connected with the production of sugar in plants, and especially of cane-sugar, that as we proceed north from the tropics, its quantity must gradually diminish. Such a view applied to the case of the beet, would of course lead to the conclusion, that the south of Europe would be best adapted for its cultivation as a source of sugar, and that cold countries like Ireland, however well they may be adapted to produce foliage and large roots, would necessarily produce beet of inferior saccharine properties. Another opinion has gained ground, that with the diminution of sugar would occur a change in its nature; or, in other words, that the same quantity of crystallisable cane-sugar would not be contained in roots grown in Ireland, and of course, for the same reason, in the northern parts of Europe generally—that is, in places north of the actual beet-sugar districts. It is certain, however, that in Russia, geographical position has but little influence upon the percentage of sugar; it depends almost entirely upon culture and manures. The fact is even stated as the result of practical experiment as well as of laboratory investigation, that there is no material difference in beet grown over a region extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Caspian Sea, and from the Mediterranean to very near the Arctic Ocean.

According to Messrs Sullivan and Gages, roots containing less than 8 per cent. of sugar could not, at the usual price paid for them, be employed with economy in the manufacture of sugar, at least not generally. Their analyses shew—as the result of examination of beet, grown on the most various soils, manured in every possible manner, not to speak of the necessarily inferior cultivation to which, as a crop new to Irish farmers, it must have been subjected—that 76 per cent. of the roots contained sufficient sugar to enable a manufacturer to extract it with profit, and 24 per cent. rendered it unfit for the purpose. Of 118 roots examined, seventy-two yielded more than 9 per cent.

* Report of Inquiry into the Composition and Cultivation of the Sugar-beet in Ireland, and its Application to the Manufacture of Sugar. Made to the Right Hon. the Chief Commissioner of Works, by the Director of the Museum of Irish Industry. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty.

of sugar, eighteen between 8 and 9 per cent., and twenty-eight below 8 per cent. Thus ninety of the 118 were adapted for profitable manufacture; twenty-eight unfit. This is favourable when compared with the analyses of continental roots, which give 70 per cent. adapted for manufacture, and 30 per cent. unsuitable. We still regard the beet question, however, as one of good cultivation: if energy and the appliances of scientific agriculture are brought to bear upon it—and they are peculiarly applicable to this crop—there can be little doubt of at least ordinary success.

In one respect, the establishment of the manufacture of beet-sugar in Ireland would seem to be highly advantageous in the present condition of that country. Under any circumstances, the introduction of new crops, and of new modes of cultivation, serves as a powerful stimulus to the general progress of husbandry in all countries. For Ireland, much has already been done in this way. Sir Robert Kane's researches seem especially to point out the advantages likely to accrue from the introduction of this new branch of agricultural industry. To us, as to him, 'it appears as eminently calculated to be of service, not only as creating a new and extensive source of manufacturing employment, but also that, as the material used can only be profitably obtained by means of improved agriculture, and that an important element in the profits of the manufacture would be the careful economy of the scums and pulp, either as manures or as food for cattle, the manufactories of beet-root sugar should exercise a powerful influence on the agriculture of their districts, inducing a greater variety of cultivation, a more thorough preparation of the soil, and a more careful economy of manures; and that, in this way, even should the manufacturing speculation become heretical, by improvement in the management of the colonial sugar industry, or by any other cause, less probably successful than it now appears to be, there should still have been conferred on Ireland a great advantage in the improved practice of green-crop husbandry, which would be certain to remain.'

The researches detailed in the Report bring out some interesting results, which have an important bearing upon the general principles of cultivation. Such must be regarded the experiments made on the effect of increase of size on the percentage of sugar. It is shown, that the larger the root, the smaller is the quantity [comparative?] of solid matter which it contains; so that 'it will be found that the quantity of sugar will diminish as the weight of the bulb increases.' This affords a valuable hint to our horticultural and agricultural societies, and may lead to the adoption of better criteria than mere size in the judging of superior productions; it is also instructive to the farmer and gardener, in so far as it teaches that mere bulk or weight of produce does not indicate the correct economical yield of a farm or garden. 'All the roots which yielded a very low percentage of sugar, weighed from five to nine or ten pounds, whilst those remarkable for the quantity of sugar which they contained were always small roots, seldom exceeding two pounds in weight.' The researches of Peligot and Hermann especially shew this; the Russian roots, which gave high percentages, rarely exceeded a pound in weight—in general, much smaller, however, than Irish-grown roots examined by Messrs Sullivan and Gages, which yielded corresponding quantities of sugar.

It seems to be satisfactorily proved, that strong manuring does not actually diminish the amount of sugar in the beet-root, but it increases the quantity of other substances, whose presence increases the difficulty of its extraction. Fresh manures appear to be always injurious to the beet-crops, but less so on loamy soils, 'upon which the oxygen of the air has more power to act.' Spring manuring is exceedingly injurious; and although the roots grown under this

treatment may yield sugar abundantly early in the season, they are worked with difficulty after being kept for a short time.

The general conclusions to which Sir Robert Kane has arrived, are—1. That the sugar-beet requires, for its successful cultivation, a rich loamy soil, thoroughly and deeply worked, thoroughly drained and divided; and that the presence of organic matter in excess, or undecomposed, in the soil, is an important disadvantage. 2. That the employment of saline or rich nitrogenous manures immediately before, or during the growth of the beet, acts unfavourably on the employment of the plant for making sugar, by rendering the juice impure, and increasing the proportion of azotised materials which readily ferment, and thereby convert the crystallisable into uncrystallisable sugar, which is the most usual and important source of loss in the manufacture. 3. That it is fully established, that the entire quantity of sugar in the beet exists naturally as crystallisable cane-sugar; and that uncrystallisable sugar makes its appearance only as a product of decomposition in the manufacture (molasses), and is, therefore, so far a source of loss, which may be avoided by improved treatment. 4. That the quantity of sugar present in Irish-grown beet is in noway inferior to that usually found in the beet-roots used in the sugar-manufactories of the continent; and that, in some cases, the percentage of sugar yielded by beet approaches to that afforded by the sugar-cane as usually cultivated.

With respect to the cost of producing the sugar-beet in Ireland, Sir Robert does not announce any positive conclusions, being rather anxious to direct attention to the estimates by practical agriculturists, contained in the Appendix to his Report. These seem to indicate, that 'the cultivation of the sugar-beet would prove at least as profitable as other green-crops usually are, provided that cultivation be carried on in a proper manner.'

We need hardly say, that something more than this is desirable. The real question is, can sugar be supplied from beet cheaper than it can be imported from Brazil and the West Indies? And to a rigid examination of this element in the subject, we crave the attention of Sir Robert Kane and other friends of Ireland, before any practical steps be taken by agriculturists. We have always heard that France, with a view to encourage home industry, persists in producing beet-sugar at a greater cost than it can purchase cane-sugar from tropical countries; thus taxing the whole people for the benefit of a class. If this be true as regards France, we would earnestly deprecate the introduction of a similarly erroneous policy into either Great Britain or Ireland.

MR KILLWINNING'S THIRD WEDDING-DAY.

'RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT!' went the knocker at No. 3 Gillyflower Place; and half-a-dozen faces from the opposite houses peeped over, and under, and between the blinds, to catch a glimpse of Mr Killwinning, who was to be married to-morrow for the third time.

'Quick!' said Ellen (at No. 3's *vis-à-vis*), 'there's Mr Killwinning!'

'Where?' asked Kate, rushing over her little brother to the window.

'There—at his own door, beginning already to take off his coat.'

'How very ridiculous!' exclaimed Kate; 'why does he do so?'

'He is rather eccentric; it's only a way he has,' replied her sister. 'A way to shew off his figure, his smart waistcoat, and his fine white linen all at once, to admiring eyes like ours!' 'A pretty figure to shew

off!' laughed Kate—'a little fussy fat man, with—Oh, how provoking!' continued she, as the door closed on Mr Killwinning; 'whither has he vanished?'

'Into the air, doubtless.'

'O no,' said Kate; 'there he is in the dining-room, pulling up the blind.'

'O do come away from the window!' implored Ellen, 'lest he should see us; and mamma would be so angry at our rudeness.'

The young ladies refrained from the window to discuss the age, looks, and circumstances of the bridegroom whom they had just seen, together with the age, looks, and circumstances of the bride whom they had never seen; and the conclusion arrived at was, that he was a remarkably neat, good-humoured-looking, little fat man, but, Kate thought, not at all desirable for a husband; and that the *fiancée* must be old and ugly, with a great deal of money—not at all interesting in a wife.

'Well,' said Kate, who was the more severe of the two, 'I don't envy Mrs Killwinning: I should like something a little more dashing and handsome for my husband!'

'And perhaps not be half so happy,' sensibly remarked Ellen. 'I assure you, notwithstanding Mr Killwinning's antiromantic appearance, he can be very agreeable, and I have no doubt will make a good husband.'

'Make a good husband!' tauntingly echoed Kate, who, just returned from visiting an aunt in a large commercial town, had conceived strange notions of tall young gentlemen with bushy dark whiskers—poor Mr Killwinning had none: 'your ideas, Ellen, are always so commonplace. It really would be charitable to persuade aunt to send you an invitation for a short time, that you might see a little of the world; but then, who could keep Charlie and Bob in order, hear them their lessons, and mend their clothes, in your absence?—Not I, I'm sure.'

'I have but little curiosity to see the world, as you call it, and am quite contented to remain where I am,' replied Ellen, 'so long as I am serviceable to my little brothers, and not entirely a burden on poor mamma.'

'Well, I suppose you like this sort of humdrum life, and aspire to the "useful" more than the "ornamental." Oh, give me the exciting gaieties of town-life—balls, plays, and concerts in rapid succession! You have no idea, Ellen, of the advantage of a brilliantly-lighted, crowded room, to a well-dressed woman; it shews her off amazingly; her face all smiles and amiability, the men think her an angel; and, nine times out of ten, requesting her hand for the next quadrille, is the prelude to soliciting it for life.'

'Why, Kate,' said Ellen, half amused, and yet a little alarmed at her sister's enthusiastic manner, 'your animated description would make one believe you were quite familiar with such scenes?'

'Alas, no!' sighed Kate. 'Aunt once contrived to send me with some friends to a fancy-ball, attired as a gipsy-girl; you may be sure "my poverty and not my will consented" to so mean a costume. I saw then where happiness was to be found: the rich monopolise it, and there is no catching even a glimpse of it unless you possess that golden key, which is the open sesame to their exclusive reunions.'

The discussion was interrupted by the announcement of 'Mrs and the Miss Jenkenses.' Miss Jenetta, Miss Joanna, and Miss Jemima Jenkens, followed their mamma into the room in single file, like geese on a common, and with not a little of that bird's spiteful propensities. 'How do you do, my loves?' asked Mrs Jenkens in her accustomed dignified and patronising manner—'Mrs Clackett is out, I suppose? Indeed, I didn't expect to find any of you at home on so sweet a morning; you shouldn't mope so, this fine summer weather; I always insist on these children [the youngest was twenty-seven] taking the air once a day; it gives

them a fine healthy appearance [they were of a lamp-post-like symmetry], and counteracts the effect of the late hours of the numerous gay parties they are forced into. You are to be at Mr Killwinning's wedding to-morrow?'

'We have not received any invitation,' said Ellen, blushing, from a consciousness of the slight, which she could not help feeling, and in which she knew the Jenkenses would triumph.

'Bless me, how very extraordinary!' exclaimed Mr Jenkens, secretly exulting that the matured charms of her daughters would not have to compete with the sprightliness of Kate, though as for the backward, awkward, and retiring Ellen, she scarcely vouchsafed her a thought. 'You quite amaze me! Poor things! I really feel for you. However, my daughters, Jenetta, Joanna, and Jemima, shall call and tell you all about it; so, my dears, you must just console yourselves with the wedding at second-hand. Jemima has a great talent for imitation, which enables her most amusingly to take off all her acquaintances; so she will give you the airs and graces of the bride to the very life; and though this is a decided slight—I should almost say an insult—don't take it to heart, dears: I promise you, you shall be at the wedding when my girls are married—[a safe promise.] By the by, Miss Kate, have you heard the rank of the bride?'

'I have not heard,' said Kate, who, from Mrs Jenkens's volubility, was allowed to say very little.

'Dear me, you know nothing!' observed Mrs Jenkens, who prided herself on knowing everything. 'Well, then, I can tell you: it is a young foreign countess—a sudden liking, quite a similar affair to the Emperor Napoleon's choice of the Countess Theta. Of course you know, Miss Ellen, for you have been more at home than your sister, that Mr Killwinning is very eccentric?'

'I know nothing more of Mr Killwinning,' said Ellen, 'than to feel convinced that, whoever his bride may be, she will justify his choice.'

'Oh, of course, of course; and that's very generous of you,' impertinently observed Mrs Jenkens, 'considering you are not invited. Then Mr Killwinning, being so exceedingly rich, may do just as he pleases. It's quite an affection his living in that small house opposite; but he does so many out-of-the-way things—for instance, his sending twenty pounds to old lame Nelly, who had her cottage burned down last week; but you don't know that either, I suppose?'

'O yes, I do know that,' provokingly replied Ellen. 'Mr Killwinning happened to ask me some questions about poor old Nelly on our way home from church last Sunday.'

'Oh, indeed!' dryly remarked Mrs Jenkens, with something of the feeling which an unexpected check at chess gives the hitherto attacking party. 'I was not aware that Mr Killwinning was in the habit of conversing with you as you came out of church! But good-bye, loves; remember us to dear Mrs Clackett. Jenetta, Joanna, and Jemima, shall each save you a little bit of bride-cake; so keep up your spirits.'

'Now confess,' said Kate, when they were gone, 'isn't it mortifying, Ellen, that Mr Killwinning should have omitted us in his invitations, thereby depriving you of one scene of gaiety at least that seemed within your reach?'

'N—no,' replied Ellen, half-reluctantly.

'As for me,' continued Kate in an exulting yet mortified tone, 'I am thankful that we shall be spared the infliction—the wedding-breakfast will be a tiresome thing, and of course, altogether, it will be a dreadfully dull affair. And for my own part, I'd much rather remain at home, but for the impertinence of that pompous, patronising Mrs Jenkens, with her prim, perpendicular daughters, looking, for all the world, like half-animated thread-papers with the silk outside.'

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'Girls,' said Mrs Clacket, the mamma, bursting into the room out of breath, card-case in hand, just returned from a round of gossiping morning-calls—'girls, go and look out your lavender silks and white-lace polkas directly. I trust they're not too shabby for the occasion,' she continued, gasping and throwing herself into a chair; 'I am most anxious you should make a good appearance. I don't mind a few shillings for ribbons. Your patent-leather shoes of course will do, and your open-work thread-stockings are the very thing. Do you hear me, girls? Have you no regard for the feelings of a mother? Will you go and look out the lavender silks?'

'But what for, mamma?' asked both girls at once.

'It was all a mistake. Mr Killwinning says—I met him just now—that we were the *first* on the list of invitations; the card has evidently been kept back through envy or mistake—the former, no doubt, I am quite convinced of that; and I am naturally anxious that my girls should look better than any body else. The Miss Potters of course will, as usual, be enveloped in their everlasting white tarletons, with their red heads protruding like the sun though a fog; I am not afraid of them, it is the Jenkenses I dread—those forward Jenkenses! I saw the three girls this morning come out of Brown's shop, followed by a boy with a parcel; I think the parcel looked soft, as if filled with nothing but tulle and ribbons—at least, I hope so—I trust there are no new dresses in the wind. If they wear their old blue-watered silks, we're safe.'

'But who is to be the bride, mamma?' inquired Kate.

'I can't tell; in fact, nobody knows. Mr Killwinning means to surprise us, that is quite evident. There are various surnames afloat: some say it is a poor orphan from Ireland, his native country; others fear it may be an actress, to whom he once anonymously sent a forget-me-not-ring; and there are apprehensions of a low marriage with a pretty servant-girl of his mother's; but as we have not heard of any bans being published, or licence procured, we're all in the dark, anxiously waiting for to-morrow morning to enlighten us.'

'But, dear mamma,' observed Kate, 'you speak of Mr Killwinning as if he were a bachelor, and yet he has been married twice. What were his first wives like?'

'Well, my dear, I did once condescend to converse with his Irish servant, who seems as eccentric as himself; and he informed me, that the first Mrs Killwinning was forty when his master was a boy of eighteen; nevertheless, as she had a great deal of money, he married her, but she lived many years to punish him for his mercenary motives: then he married a governess, who was consumptive, and popped off very soon: he came here immediately on her decease—eighteen months ago come next August—and has certainly made himself excessively agreeable at all our balls and parties, but without a rumour of any intention to marry again, until the issue of invitations to his wedding-breakfast took us all by surprise; and, what is more surprising still, and, I think, proves that his bride must be a mere nobody, the wedding-breakfast is to be at his own house, and before the ceremony has taken place—however, he is very eccentric, and does all things differently from other people.'

The lavender silks were now produced: Kate's had undergone severe service on the visit to her aunt, while Ellen's was almost as good as new; it was therefore suggested by Ellen, faintly opposed by Kate, and ultimately and gladly decided by the mamma, as Kate was the pet and the elder, and both the same style of figure, that there should be an exchange of dresses—'It didn't so much matter for Ellen,' who gave up her bright-looking silk quite cheerfully; and really after hemming-up the frayed bottom of the skirt, and rubbing out a few stains with the last 'new patent reviver,' Kate's old gown, like Dominie Sampson's second suit, seemed

'renovated miraculously.' The mamma—a smart widow of two years' standing, with much to do on very small means—was to be attired in her becoming second-mourning gray satin.

The house was in a perfect bustle of preparation, Mrs Clacket giving directions to everybody about everything; at last concluding the evening's lecture to her daughters in these words: 'And now, girls, let me impress upon you the necessity of looking your best. Of all parties for young people, a wedding-party is the most important; it is so exceedingly catching, never passing off without a proposal to somebody. The elegant Mr Henderson, who is evidently thinking of getting married, will be there; and Dr Quackem of Croston Lodge, Caryll Row, whose sickly wife, notwithstanding all his skill and new mode of treatment, can't last much longer. What are you giggling at, Kate? Ellen, you needn't frown; a mother's anxiety justifies my looking forward to these casualties. The times are dreadful. All the men are going to Australia—and what prospect has a mother for her marriageable daughters? Therefore, my dear girls, let me beseech you to make the most of yourselves; and, Ellen, as your hair—like Samson's—is your strong point, put it in papers, braids being so universally worn, the singularity of ringlets will be attractive.'

The girls promised to obey their mamma, and commenced all the mysteries of curling and crimping, to give the hair that full wavy appearance which was to make the tide flow in their favour, and overwhelm and extinguish the Potters and Jenkenses for ever.

Meanwhile, Mr Killwinning, the grand cause of this excitement, was lounging on the sofa, sipping his wine, and reading *Punch* in the cool of the evening—the last of his double widower-hood—when his servant Tim entered the room, and with many bows and scrapes commenced: 'I humbly axes pardon, sir; but Biddy the cook has seduced me—as she says, it's necessary to the domestic arrangements of the establishment—to make so bould as to inquire whether the mistress'll slape at home to-morrow night?'

'What's that to you or Biddy the cook either, sir?'

'Nothin' in life, sir; and I'm glad for the honor iv th' family, that you don't mane it. May I make so bould agin, sir, as to inquire, without offence, if it's your intention to take a continental trip over the provinces in the express thrain?'

'At fault again, Tim; so I warn you to make no more impertinent inquiries.'

'Long life to your honor—I've hit it at last! You'll do the thing gintaley, as all the Killwinnins did before you, and go off in the thrus methropolis Dublin style—in an illigant yell po-shay-and-four?'

'I shall not satisfy your curiosity, Tim—so get out.'

'Is it get out? Sure, I'm goin', sir; I've only one more confidential communication to make, sir—am I to meet her at the thrain, sir?'

'Meet whom, Tim?'

'The mistress, sir.'

'What mistress, Tim?'

'That's what I'd like to know, sir?'

'You mean the future Mrs Killwinning, I suppose?'

'Divil another, sir!'

'I don't expect her by train, Tim.'

'Then, as this is an in-land, how is she to come, sir?'

'Like Venus, rising from the sea; and so on, completing the journey in the first overland balloon she meets with,' said Mr Killwinning.

'What with the wather and the wind, it'll be a cowld journey, sir!'

'Depend upon it, Tim, Mrs Killwinning will send you about your business, if you're so bold.'

'Sure, sir, I've always been told that my bashfulness gits the better iv me. Didn't the girls nickname me "Timorous Tim" through Dublin and the parts

adjacent? But there's one thing troubles me, sir, and I'd like to speake it.'

'Well, out with it, Tim.'

'We've seen none iv th' coortin', sir; and the divil a bit of a ladylike letter have you ever given me to dthrop into the post; and puttin' that and that together, Biddy the cook's consarned for you, sir, seein' that she's an Irish girl like myself, and has apprehensions that you're strugglin' under a delusion.'

'What do you mean by a delusion, Tim?'

'It's this, sir: I wanst knew a gentlemint, a personal frind iv my own, who was rejoiced in his circumstances to drivin' a car round the Lakes iv Killarney; he was laborin' under the same desease as yourself, sir—that a lady was goin' to marry him; and when the weddin'-night came, his bride turned into a throat, and was fried for his supper.'

'Well,' said his master, laughing, 'tell Biddy she'll have other fish to fry when Mrs Killwinning comes home. By the by, Tim—'

'Yes, sir.'

'Has my new coat come home?'

'It has, sir.'

'And when are the waiters to be here from Dawson's Hotel, to set out the breakfast?'

'At seven o'clock, sir; the quality's invited at nine, seein' that's an airy hour, and won't put people about. Will you take a feevur to-morrow, sir?'

'I hope not, Tim; unless you call taking a wife a fever.'

'By no manes, sir; it's a feevur to put at the breast. I've got all the feevurs in a box; and whiles the tay and coffey's poorn' out, I'll be pinnin' them to the postilions and the horses' heads. You'll get to the church, sir—for I hope you won't be after tying the Hymenael-knot in a hathenish fashion in the house—before eleven; and you and Mrs Killwinning, good luck to her! wherever she may come from—will be off by twelve, to kape the honeymoon in the yell po-shay.'

'Now, Tim, I've had quite enough of you, so get out.'

'Goin', sir.'

'Take care that everything looks well; make the most of the plate and chins; do you hear?'

'No fears, sir; and my heart's glad that you're takin' an intherist in the looks of things. I axes pardon agin, sir,' said Tim, his face full of anxiety, 'but I'm unsay about your personal appearance, and I know that ladies is particilar. Ever since the rheumatics, you tak to wearin' them red night-caps—wouldn't a white one be more becomin', sir?'

This was too much, and Tim was fairly turned out of the room.

The sun shone brightly on the morning of Mr Killwinning's third wedding-day. At half-past eight, the guests began to arrive. Tim had either bought or borrowed a bright pea-green swallow-tailed coat and yellow waistcoat, which was his beau-ideal of a marriage-garment. He was determined to do the thing in style, so far as he was concerned; and according to his own notions of gentility, posted himself at the drawing-room door, to announce 'the quality,' whispering to Biddy, as she bustled about: 'I'm gettin' unsay, muisa! Where's the bride to come from? We'll be disgraced entirely! There's masther lookin' illigant in the drawing-room, and nobody comin' to marry him! Biddy, my jewel! couldn't you dress yourself in a wrathe of orange-blossom, to kape up the posterity and respectability of the Killwinnings?'

'Indeed, thin, Tim,' said Biddy, 'I wouldn't be after doin' so unlucky a thing as to put on the wrathe before my own time comes; let the masther find a wrathe for the bride, and a bride for the wrathe.' The guests arriving quickly, Tim resumed the dignity of office.

'The Honorable Miss Potters—of Roundabout Place, bawled Tim, announcing the little Potters, who looked

as symmetrical as so many Dutch cheeses. 'Mr Jeremiah Henderson—of the Branch Bank of Illigance—England, I mane,' continued Tim, dubbing, sotto voce, every one with his vocation, or some title of his own conferring. 'The three Miss Jenkenses—of Treacle Terrace, spinsters!'

The three Miss Jenkenses, who overheard the description, simultaneously turned their frowning faces towards Tim—'if looks could kill, he had not lived,' but nothing daunted, he went on. 'The Very Riverint Archdeacon Tithe-ever—from the Close-cum-Catchall, D.D. The learned Doctor Quackem of Cross-Bones Lodge, Cure-ill Row, M.D. Save us and presarve us! Mr Flexible Flint—of Tinder-touch Hall; and Mrs and Miss Clacketts—from over the way!'

These, with several others, made a comfortable squeeze at the breakfast-table, where everything was elegantly arranged, and at the head of which sat Mr Killwinning; really looking remarkably well, and almost interesting. The breakfast was so substantial, as to cause some of the gentlemen to forget that they had come for any other purpose than to partake of it; but the ladies were vigilant watchers, with one eye on the door, and the other on Mr Killwinning, who seemed more than ever agreeable and polite to all; yet an accurate observer might notice a slight restlessness and increasing anxiety, which, without impairing his extreme urbanity, seemed at variance with his usual placid equanimity.

Miss Clacket, who couldn't be silent, and who, seated on Mr Killwinning's right, kept up a running-fire of small-talk, said: 'My dear Mr Killwinning, allow me to congratulate you on—the weather'—there certainly seemed to be no wife forthcoming to congratulate him upon—'I consider this bright morning particularly auspicious; and you know the old saying: "Happy is the bride the sun shines on."

This was a sort of electric touch that turned all eyes into a note of interrogation towards Mr Killwinning. He answered it with the most ingenuous smile, saying: 'My dear Mrs Clacket, she shall be as happy as a devoted husband can make her; and I trust she may long look as bright and beautiful as she does at this moment!'

More notes of interrogation from 'ladies' eyes around! This allusion of Mr Killwinning's gave the bride 'a local habitation,' though no name. She must be in the room—but where? Some fancied she might be shut up in the cupboard; others, that she was under the table. Mr Flexible Flint, a soft young gentleman, drawed out to Miss Jenkens: 'Our friend, the bridegroom, appears to be indulging in a hallucination, or is under the influence of clairvoyance, unless, my dear Miss Jenkens, you are the happy woman.'

'Oh, Heaven forbid!' replied Miss Jenkens, with well-affected indignation.

Mr Killwinning—whose every word and movement were undergoing severe criticism—now looked at his watch.

'He begins to suspect he's jilted,' whispered Flint to Jenkens.

Mr Killwinning rose, evidently for the purpose of making a speech.

'Poor devil!' compassionately exclaimed Flint.

An awful pause ensued—all eyes right on Mr Killwinning. No one had time to observe Biddy and Tim popping their heads half in at the door.

Mr Killwinning commenced: 'Ladies and gentlemen—but especially the ladies—I entreat your compassionate and patient attention to what I am about to say—'

'It's going to be his last dying speech and confession,' whispered Flint to Jenkens.

Miss Jenkens replied in the usual bad joke about 'the halter,' with a faint smile, intended to conceal her anxiety.

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'I find myself in a somewhat embarrassing position—I've done a singularly bold thing; I've invited you to a wedding, in the hope that a certain lady would honour me with her hand; and I have yet to ascertain whether I'm to be triumphant, or to suffer defeat. As you are all pleased to call me eccentric, you will, I know, make eccentricity my excuse; but at the same time, my dear ladies, in the present instance at least, allow sincerity to be coupled with it. The fact is, I have—in plain words—for some time past been looking out for a wife; but among so many accomplished and lovely women, I could scarcely presume to hope.' (Every face beamed with an encouraging and radiant smile towards Mr Killwinning at this compliment.) 'And if I am to be rejected when I name the lady—and she is in this room, at this present moment!—the greatest excitement now prevailed, with a faint cry from the little Potters of 'hear,' (here?) but whether the verb or the adverb, it were indecorous to guess—'I confess that my presumption deserves rejection; and she shall have her revenge on the spot by a public refusal.' (Here Mr Killwinning most provokingly began to beat about the bush.) 'I doubt if I should ever have had the good fortune—the young lady will pardon my presumption in venturing to say *good fortune*, until I know my fate—were it not that there appeared to be a tacit agreement among her female friends, that she was "born to blush unseen"; and the gentle, quiet resignation, with which she seemed to enter into this very prejudicial arrangement was to me, I confess, the most fascinating charm that ever lovely woman possessed. Of all others she is the one, and the only one, I would select for a wife; and, eccentric though I be, I feel assured that even her delicacy will pardon the mode in which I thus testify to her retiring, unobtrusive worth, even though it be fatal to my present pretensions, and, I fear, ruinous to my future happiness. I conclude by proposing—no; by respectfully offering my hand and fortune to your youngest daughter, Mrs Clacket.'

A very audible 'Oh!' burst from all the ladies at once. Ellen was on the point of fainting, but was supported by her astonished sister; Mrs Clacket, in a state between laughing and crying, was giving Mr Killwinning's hand sundry convulsive squeezes. Mr Killwinning's speech had made all the ladies in love with him, though no one could tell how the proposal was received, for Ellen, her face buried in her handkerchief, was led from the room. Mr Killwinning, now really looking the picture of unhappiness, followed; and then of course all tongues were loosened, and Mr Killwinning's singular declaration loudly discussed.

'A most indecorous proceeding!' exclaimed young Flint. 'The girl's feelings are outraged. Of course, she'll refuse him.'

'Yes; but what a triumph!' said the envious Miss Jenkins. 'Who could have possibly conceived that he meant Ellen Clacket?'

Just at this moment, the door of the inner apartment opened, discovering Mr Killwinning rising in rapture from his knees, pressing the hand of Ellen to his lips. He led forward his blushing bride—attired, too, like a bride, a magnificent marriage-veil being thrown over her; Mr Killwinning having taken the precaution of sending to London for a bridal *trousseau*, on the chance of its being required, together with a special licence; while the Rev. Mr Tithe-ever had been prepared to act upon it by performing the ceremony, which was heard, loudly vociferating: 'Stop the weddin'! Stop the weddin'!' mingled with the still more suspicious cry of 'Stop, thief!'

All faces looked amazement. 'Pon honour,' whispered Flint to Jenkins, 'I suspect Killwinning will turn out a swindler.'

At this instant, Tim rushed into the room, exclaim-

ing: 'Stop! what the devil are you about? Would you be drivin' all the luck from the weddin' without the wrath of orange-blossom that I'm to be hanged for staling? Didn't I, when I saw master was goin' to have a rare wife, start off for Mrs Fadda, the milliner's, and extract this issintial from the window, and she sendin' a spaldeen of a police after me, shoutin': "Stop that!" but I've sint the thransmogrified lobster down stairs quicker than he came up!'

'Well, Tim,' said Mr Killwinning, throwing him a £10 bank-note, 'there's something to pay for your deputation; and Mrs Killwinning will not forget your bold, yet eccentric devotion, *Timorous Tim*.'

Kate now encircled the 'attractive ringlets' of her sister with Tim's wreath of orange-blossom, which caused Tim to dance about, throwing up his slipper in the air something after the Eastern fashion, exclaiming: 'Long life to her! She looks like the Phanix Park when the May's out!**

The ceremony now proceeded; and at the conclusion, all was good-humoured congratulation. 'What a romantic marriage!' exclaimed the little Potters.

'Allow me to congratulate you, Mrs Killwinning,' said Flexible Flint. 'Pon honour, Killwinning, it's too bad to take her by storm in this way, and leave us poor bachelors in the lurch.'

How willingly now would the Jenkenses have exchanged situations with Ellen, when, by the kind forethought of Mr Killwinning, she appeared equipped for her journey in the most elegant and appropriate apparel! But this was not all: a new carriage, with four beautiful grays, drew up to the door. Poor Mrs Clacket was in ecstasies, scarcely believing in the reality of her having a daughter about to step into her own carriage, which the ill-natured Jenkenses—who kept a spring-cart—affirmed she did most awkwardly, and unlike any one accustomed to an equipage.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

April 1833.

CONVERSAZIONI, réunions, and soirées, are now coming thick and fast upon us, greatly to the discomfort of those who dislike the penance of trying to look happy in overcrowded and overheated rooms, where enjoyment is out of the question. Among these gatherings, however, those held at the houses of our leading *savants* are an exception; for there is less throng, and you hear matters talked about that are worth listening to. For instance: that the reforms in law are not to be confined to the measures now before parliament, but will be carried on until a simple code shall replace the unwieldy legal machinery now in use, and law shall become more just and less costly: That the secret history of elections, as revealed by the late inquiries in parliament, is disgraceful to our national character, and calls for a prompt and stringent remedy. Then arises the question, What sort of a remedy?—What measures can be adopted that will inspire the multitude of Esaus with a love of right, or a wholesome dread of the consequences of wrong? We shall perhaps see before the session is over: That the government will make a great mistake if, as is reported, they stamp and issue 500 tons of copper coin, without first coming to a decision on the decimal currency question. Fifteen years ago, the Standard Commission reported, that 'no single change which it is in the power of a government to effect in our monetary system, would be felt by all classes as equally beneficial with this.' Surely it is time that the benefit should be realised, especially as the process presents but few difficulties. Reckon 1000 farthings to the pound sterling; and then, advancing by tens or parts of tens through our other coins, the thing is accomplished.

* The Phoenix Park, Dublin, is celebrated for its avenues of May-blossom.

The decimal system must prevail some day; and why not now? The change would seem to be the more necessary, in face of the new treaty of commerce between Prussia and Austria, which is much talked about. The effect of this treaty will extend from the Rhine to the Rhône, from the Baltic to the Adriatic, and will benefit 78,000,000 of people. The absurd and vexatious custom-house regulations at the numerous frontiers, are to be set aside in favour of raw materials, which are to be admitted duty-free into either state; while in the whole territory embraced by the treaty, even in Italy, the coinage is to be uniform in value and in name. How greatly such a measure will facilitate commercial and social intercourse, will be best understood by those who have suffered most from the defects of the present system; but to render it complete, there must be uniform postage. We are promised by our post-office authorities, that henceforth sixpence shall be the charge for letters to our colonies, in whatever part of the world. It is objected, however, that this rate is far too high; and the advocates of Ocean Penny-postage are no way inclined to yield a point of their demand. There is no distress to prevent these reforms being attempted. The deadweight of pauperism is diminishing; the number receiving poor-law relief on January 1, 1852, was 835,860; on January 1 of the present year it had fallen to 799,443. In Ireland, too, the expenditure for paupers in 1852 was £280,000 under that of 1851; and, though emigration still goes on rapidly, the vacated farms are speedily relet. The Irish Land Company have just imported some of the best breeds of cattle and horses from England, with a view to improve their home-stocks. Here, a project is mooted for a Lands Improvement Company—to drain and improve farms and estates, and recover the cost by an annual charge. It may perhaps revive the fortunes of distressed agriculturists. The Netherlands Land Company are making good progress; the 1500 acres reclaimed at the mouth of the Scheldt last year are now enclosed, and 2000 acres more are to be taken in during the present season. The whole work of reclamation is not to cost more than £150,000; and the result, it is said, will pay a handsome dividend. Such are a few of the subjects touched upon at the gatherings mentioned above; while at Lord Rose's soirées, of which the first has been given, the whole cycle of sciences comes in for discussion. In addition to the Fellows of the Royal Society, his lordship's invitations bring together members of the royal family, the ministers of state, the foreign ambassadors, and a host of individuals eminent in art, learning, and literature.

Our merchants are put on the alert by the fact, that a considerable trade is springing up between the United States and Australia. There is talk of a line of steamers from New York to Melbourne. The *Golden Age* is the name of a vessel just built to ply from Panama to Sydney, in connection with the traffic across the Isthmus. She is 3000 tons burden, and is to carry 1200 passengers, and will get over her portion of the route, across the Pacific, so rapidly, that the voyage from New York will not require more than thirty-five days, and from England fifty days. What a contrast this presents to the miserable failures that have taken place of late with Australian steamers! If the colonists were wise, they would dig for coal, of which they have abundance, as well as gold, and thereby insure greater certainty in steam navigation. Another scheme under consideration by the Americans, is for a line of six vessels, of 3000 tons each, to run once a month between Western America and Eastern Asia. Starting from San Francisco, they are to touch at the Sandwich Islands, on their way to China and Japan. Brother Jonathan evidently believes that the rebellion in China will open chances in his favour; and to keep them, it is said, he means to arm his vessels.

We are, it seems, to entertain no apprehensions of a

decrease in the yield of gold; for Michel Chevalier says, that gold-mining will not be temporary, but 'a permanent fact.' And it is now shewn, by investigations made at the Government School of Mines, that the precious metal is more widely diffused than could have been supposed. Dr Percy tells us, that 'a sensible and visible amount of gold has been extracted from every variety of British and foreign lead, as well as every specimen of litharge, minium, whitelead, and acetate of lead, which has been examined. It has also been extracted, in very sensible proportion, from commercial bismuth. Between thirty and forty determinations have already been made.' After this discovery, we may qualify our opinion of the old alchemists with a little charity: they had perhaps better grounds for their belief in transmutation than we give them credit for.

There is another ancient doctrine in process of revival: the early Hindoo philosophers held that light was a material substance; and now we have speculations and deductions put forward by a Cambridge philosopher, based on the assumption of light being a viscous fluid. His views will not lack examination and keen criticism, for the Cantabs are eminent in the science of optics.

Dr Tyndall's lecture at the Royal Institution has met with marked attention, and won for its author a place among the foremost of natural philosophers. He demonstrated by experiment, that the line of greatest density, or greatest pressure of bodies, is that of the strongest magnetic attraction or repulsion. A perfectly homogeneous substance, if magnetic, becomes diamagnetic when squeezed, as exemplified by a lozenge or biscuit, which undergoes a greater pressure in one direction than in the other. We thus see that aggregation of particles has much to do with magnetic phenomena, and anything which alters the aggregation will necessarily alter the magnetic indications. Hence the heat of the sun acting on the earth's crust will in future have to be considered as an element in the phenomena of terrestrial magnetism. In concluding his lecture, Dr Tyndall paid a well-deserved compliment to Professor Faraday: 'I rejoice,' he said, 'in the opportunity here afforded me, of offering my tribute to the greatest worker of the age, and of laying some of the blossoms of that prolific tree which he planted, at the feet of the great discoverer of diamagnetism.'

A paper by Mr Toynebee, read before the Royal Society, contains some particulars interesting to deaf people. Much of the deafness that occurs is found to be caused by an aperture having formed in the drum of the ear; in such cases, if an artificial drum, made of vulcanised India rubber or gutta percha be introduced, the cavity is again closed, and the power of hearing is considerably restored. It is hardly necessary to add, that the old notions about certain little bones beating on the tympanum drummer-wise are altogether fallacious.

Sir Charles Lyell is at work on a new edition of his *Principles*, which, among other matters, is to contain the sum of all that we know concerning great geological changes. Herewith connected, an interesting point is raised by Mr Alfred Tylor, who argues that the sea-level, which is generally taken as the datum in geological and other scientific calculations, is by no means to be considered as permanent. He shews that the solid matters discharged into the sea by rivers would form a deposit three inches in thickness over the bottom in the course of 10,000 years, and consequently raise the level of the water by that amount. The Ganges drains 400,000 square miles, and in 1751 years would reduce the level of the vast region by one foot. The Mississippi, which drains 1,100,000, carries one foot from the surface of the soil into the sea in 9000 years. Thus the level of the land will be lowered, while that of the sea is raised; the latter cannot,

therefore, be regarded as fixed and permanent in geological calculations. The water is to the land as three to one; and taking that portion of the globe on which rain falls, Mr Tylor observes: 'If this area be annually reduced in level at the same rate as the district through which the Mississippi flows, then the mean level of the land on the globe would be reduced three feet in 54,000 years, and, consequently, the level of the ocean raised one foot in the same period by means of the detritus suspended in river-water poured into the ocean.' In the present activity of geological inquiry, the subject is particularly interesting; but it is only by very close observation that we shall be able to determine the point from trustworthy data.

It will surprise many to know, that we need no longer depend on China for tea, but drink our home-grown English, and so be independent of the foreigner—if such independence is worth caring about. Mr Alexander Forsyth has addressed a communication to the Horticultural Society, in which he says that, having considered that the tea of Paraguay is a species of holly, he tried our common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and finds the leaves, when washed, equal to ordinary five-shilling tea. The prickles serve an important purpose, for they keep the leaves separated during the roasting, and thus save the trouble of frequent turning. The smell given off is at first unpleasant, but it disappears entirely as the leaves cool. 'What will tea-drinkers, confirmed tipping tea-drinkers, say to this?' observes Mr Forsyth. 'The very tea itself becomes cheap at last, and abundant, growing even in the garden-hedge. A forest of tea-trees in full leaf at our door! Such a harvest has never before been seen. Waste not the holly any more upon whip-handles; peel it not for bird-lime, as for merly; squander it not even at Christmas; but reap it, roast it, and drink it again and again, for the store will be annually renewed, and the future foliage will furnish finer tea-leaves than those just gathered.' What an opportunity here for the adulterators; they will doubtless take care that the public shall drink holly-tea whether or no!

Professor Wartmann, of Geneva, has been working on the conductivity of minerals and the electric light; he obtained the latter by means of a pile of fifty pairs, with Duboscq's instrument for adjusting the points. The light was such as almost to blind his assistant; and was strong enough for the taking of daguerreotypes. On one occasion it was found equal to the light from 300 gas jets; and persons could read by it at more than 100 yards' distance, although rain was falling at the time; and it was distinctly seen from a place 16,000 metres distant from Geneva. If the results be really as described, we may have the electric light in our houses and streets, with apparatus suitable for regulating it. To obviate the objection that alleys would be left in darkness, Professor Wartmann shews that several pairs of points may be introduced into one and the same circuit, and by placing these at the principal corners and turnings, no part of a town would be left in darkness. The electric light is not forgotten in this country; and a few zealous individuals are doing their best to produce it as an accomplished fact.

Indian affairs are receiving much attention, and are warmly discussed: some contend for keeping things as they are in our great Asiatic Empire—as though there was no corruption in that misruled country—while others declare that the time has come for really enlightened and liberal government. What would not India become if it were regarded as an improvable empire, as well as a taxable one! We shall see what railways will do for it; the lines already complete are quite successful. Not less so the telegraph: it works so well, that additional lines are to be erected to the extent of 3000 miles. A short time since, some delay having occurred in the transmission of signals from one of the stations, the cause was asked, and answer

returned, that no one could get near the office with messages, as two tigers, and some other ferocious creatures were prowling about the office. Highly characteristic this of the jungle districts, though not an enviable position for the clerk. Three-eighths iron-rod, weighing a ton per mile, is used for the line instead of wire, stretched on bamboo posts, which resist hurricanes better than those made of wood. The large size of the iron rod renders insulators unnecessary, and insures safety in the desert regions across which it will be carried. The instruments are of cheap construction, costing no more than £10 for each station. Natives will be trained to act as clerks, as they are less liable to attacks of fever than Europeans. Further of telegraphs: the Austrian government is about to stretch the wires from Agram to Zara, on the Adriatic, for the reason that steamers can touch at the latter port, when they cannot make Trieste, by which means we shall get our news from the East in two days' less time than at present. And here, at home, our Electric Telegraph Company report, that their dominion comprehends 5500 miles of telegraph, and 21,000 miles of wire, with 140 stations, besides those in London.

We have now a Photographic Society, just started, full of youthful vigour, publishing a weekly journal, and achieving wonders in the way of sun-pictures. Experiments are being made, and with some success, to get an impression from light direct upon stone, which, when accomplished, will open quite a new field of artistic printing. The directors of the Bank of England also have shewn what can be done in typography: the beauty and perfection of their new cheques are surprising. Instead of being printed from copperplate, as heretofore, they are now printed from copper type. The new process is to be applied, also, to the bank-notes, with a new electrotype vignette of exquisite workmanship; and the whole, including the signature, will be printed at once. By this change, the appearance of the notes will be improved, and the difficulty of imitation increased. There will be economy in it for the Bank, as fewer hands will be required for the printing, and the type will last an indefinite time. The consumption of notes is enormous: from 20,000 to 30,000 are cancelled every day; but they are not now burnt as formerly, they are chopped up almost small enough for ultimate atoms, and then sold to be converted into common paper. Another economy: and government are effecting a similar saving—they no longer give the waste blue-books and envelopes to their messengers, but have them repurposed, and made into paper.

TWEEN DECKS OF THE FROZEN SHIPS.

Before we enter upon the subject of returning spring, and the new occupations and excitement which it called forth, let me try to convey an idea of a day spent in total darkness, as far as the sun was concerned. Fancy the lower deck and cabins of a ship lighted entirely by candles and oil-lamps; every aperture by which external air could enter, unless under control, carefully secured, and all doors doubled to prevent draughts. It is breakfast-time, and reeking hot cocoan from every mess-table is sending up a dense vapour, which, in addition to the breath of so many souls, fills the space between decks with mist and fog. Should you go on deck—and remember you go from 50 degrees above zero to 40 degrees below it, in eight short steps—a column of smoke will be seen rising through certain apertures called ventilators, whilst others are supplying a current of pure air. Breakfast done—and from the jokes and merriment, it has been a good one—there is a general pulling on of warm clothing, and the major part of the officers and men go on deck. A few remain, to clean and clear up, arrange for the dinner, and remove any damp or ice that may have formed in holes or corners during the sleeping hours. This done, a muster of all hands, called 'divisions,' took place. Officers inspected the men

and every part of the ship, to see both were clean, and then they dispersed to their several duties, which at this severe season were very light; indeed, confined mainly to supplying the cook with snow to melt for water, keeping the fire-hole in the floe open, and sweeping the decks. Knots of two or three would, if there was not a strong gale blowing, be seen taking exercise at a distance from the vessels, and others, strolling under the lee, discussed the past and prophesied as to the future. At noon, soups, preserved meats, or salt-horse, formed the seamen's dinner, with the addition of preserved potatoes, a treat which the gallant fellows duly appreciated. The officers dined somewhat later—2 p.m. A little afternoon exercise was then taken, and the evening meal, of tea, next partaken of. If it was school-night, the voluntary pupils went to their tasks, the masters to their posts; reading-men producing their books, writing-men, their desks; artists painted by candle-light; and cards, chess, or draughts, combined with conversation, and an evening's glass of grog, and a cigar or pipe, served to bring round bedtime again. Monotony was our enemy, and to kill time our endeavour; hardship there was none; for all we underwent in winter-quarters, in the shape of cold, hunger, or danger, was voluntary. Monotony, as I again repeat, was the only disagreeable part of our wintering at Griffith's Island. Some men among us seemed, in their temperament, to be much better able to endure this monotony than others; and others, who had no source of amusement—such as reading, writing, or drawing—were much to be pitied. Nothing struck one more than the strong tendency to talk of home and England: it became quite a disease. We, for the most part, spoke as if all the most affectionate husbands, dutiful sons, and attached brothers, had found their way into the arctic expeditions.—*Stray Leaves from an Arctic Journal*, by Lieutenant Osborn.

STATE OF EDUCATION IN FRANCE.

An American in Paris, in concluding a long letter on the boarding-schools in France, makes the following general statements:—"The population of France is 36,000,000. In her primary schools, she has 2,332,580 pupils, or the ratio of 1-16th of her population, supported at an annual expense of 1,800,000 dollars, or an average to each pupil of about 75 cents. The state of New York, in 1851, expended on 724,291 pupils in her common schools, 1,432,096 dollars, or an average of nearly 2 dollars a head for one-fourth of her population, while she has a fund of 6,612,850 dollars devoted to purposes of education. The actual difference is, that while New York expends twice and two-thirds as much on each pupil as France, she educates her population also in the ratio of fourfold in point of numbers. France expends more upon the tomb of Napoleon than upon her entire Ecoles Primaires; and the city of Paris, from 1800 to 1845, has spent at the Hôtel de Ville, in fêtes to the several governments of France, 2,000,000 dollars—a sum sufficient to support its common schools, at the present rate of appropriation, for fifteen years. Previous to 1830, the cost of primary instruction in Paris was but 16,000 dollars annually. Since then, it has been increased to 250,000 dollars, and the number of children frequenting the schools is about 45,000, or 1-22d part of the population. In the colleges, institutions, and boarding-schools of the city, there are 11,000 pupils; but these embrace the *élite* of the south from all parts of the country. The total number of pupils in the lycées, colleges, and private institutions in France, for 1850, was 92,231—making a total of 2,424,811 children only, out of the 18,000,000 in France, receiving any degree of education. The military conscription shews, that out of every 1000 young men drawn, about 40 know how to read and write, 500 to read only, and more than 400 have no instruction whatever."—*Canadian Journal of Education*.

THE WAISTS OF AMERICAN LADIES.

The unnatural length and ridiculous smallness of their waists baffle description. A waist that could be spanned is an English metaphorical expression used in a novel, but it is an American fact; and so alarming does it appear to an Englishman, that my first sentiment, on viewing the phenomenon, was one of pity for unfortunate beings who

might possibly break off in the middle, like flowers from the stalk, before the evening concluded. No less extraordinary is the size of the ladies' arms. I saw many which were scarce thicker than moderate-sized walking-sticks. Yet, strange to say, when these ladies pass the age of forty, they frequently attain an enormous size. The whole economy of their structure is then reversed, their wrists and arms becoming the thickest parts of the body. Here is a subject worthy the contemplation of the ethnologist. How comes it to pass that the English type—which I presume has not, in every case, been so affected by the admixture of others as to lose its own identity—how comes it to pass, I say, that the English type is so strangely altered in a few generations? I have heard various hypotheses: amongst others, the habits of the people—the dry climate. The effect of the latter on a European constitution would have appeared to me sufficient to account for the singular confirmation, if I had not been persuaded by natives of the country, that the small waist is mainly owing to tight-lacing. This practice, it is said, is persevered in to an alarming extent; and if report be true, it is to be feared that the effects will be felt by future generations to a greater degree than they are at present.—*Dublin University Magazine*.

THE STRANGER ROSE.

BY MRS NEWTON CROSLAND.

A YOUNG Moss-rose in a hedgerow grew—

Twas planted there by a merry child—
And fairies fed it with limpid dew,

Till Flora's self on its beauty smiled.
The merchant Berry, and soldier Thorn

(The hedge was a little world, you know),
Upcurled their leaves with a look of scorn,

Like lips that our world can sometimes shew.

The Dog-rose said: 'I am thrice as gay,'

Despised by all was the stranger thing;

And they twined their straggling boughs away,

As if to touch it some harm would bring!

But the Dog-rose soon with envy drooped,

The butterfly left her quite alone;

And honey-bees all in rapture stood

To gather wealth at the mossy cone.

The Berry and Thorn looked now askance,

Despising such creatures' tastes, said they;

But next observed that each maiden's glance

To the mossy flower would fondly stray.

So a concile met in briery sheen,

To find who the Stranger-guest might be;

But She was dead ere they owned her Queen,

Or Envy's soul could her merit see.

REPOSITORY OF TRACTS.

Inquiries have been made by various persons, whether the cheap publication lately commenced, under the title of CHAMBERS'S REPOSITORY OF INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING TRACTS, is a re-issue of the MISCELLANY OF TRACTS, published a few years ago. It therefore becomes necessary to state, that the REPOSITORY is an entirely new work; it resembles the MISCELLANY only in size and price; the matter is new, and prepared on purpose. A Number appears every week, a Part every month, and a Volume, neatly done up for the pocket, at the end of every two months.

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